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Behind the shake-up: Ford tightens grip

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Replacing Colby, Schlesinger with 'own men'; reining Kissinger

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Washington
A President seen by associates as "getting bolder by the second" has made sudden, startling shifts in his administration which those close to him say is "another sign" of a new, more decisive, tougher Gerald Ford.

"First, it's his proposal for a \$100 billion energy plan," a friend of the President says. "Then it's this proposal for a \$23 billion tax cut and spending cut. And now he fires [Defense Secretary James] Schlesinger and [CIA director William] Colby and cuts [Secretary of State Henry] Kissinger down to size."

"Jerry Ford is showing everybody that while he hasn't been in office very long, he is the President of the United States."

Now comes word, apparently initiated by the Vice-President, that Mr. Rockefeller will not be available for the No. 2 spot on the ticket next year.

Is this in response to presidential and/or Republican pressure on Rockefeller to step aside in order to make room for Ronald Reagan for vice-president and thus — perhaps — dissuade Reagan from challenging Ford for the presidency?

Was Rockefeller miffed over the President's unwillingness to provide federal aid for New York City? Or over what is seen by some as the apparent demotion of his longtime friend, Henry Kissinger, who loses the post of White House national security adviser?

Before President Ford was scheduled to hold a televised press conference late Nov. 3, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D) of Montana said Mr. Ford intended to nominate White House chief of Staff Donald Rumsfeld as Defense Secretary and U.S. envoy to Peking

George Bush as CIA director. Senator Mansfield said Mr. Ford had said that "for some time he had wanted to set up his own team."

The politics behind the President's bold assertiveness, his friends say, is this:

Mr. Ford believes that the public likes and will vote for a president who is strong, decisive, "gutsy," even if they may not always approve of where he stands on some issues.

He does not subscribe to the theory that he must do something to appease the Left or to something else to appease the Right if he is to win next year.

One friend of the President who is considered privy to his thinking has this explanation of what happened:

"The President wanted to reduce Kissinger's power. In fact, he has been wanting for some time to move Kissinger out of the White House job. But he didn't know how he could do it without seriously undercutting Kissinger in the eyes of foreign leaders."

"So he downplays the Kissinger move by putting it into a package — where he fires Schlesinger (I don't think the chemistry was good between the President and his Secretary

of Defense). And he gets rid of Colby, too, simply because he thinks he needs a new man in there to restore credibility to the CIA."

"He hopes that Kissinger will take it more gracefully as a part of a package like this. And he hopes that Kissinger's usefulness won't be hurt when viewed — by foreign leaders — as a part of several presidential moves."

However, there are critics of the President who say that the "reducing" of Kissinger's role may not only undercut him and his usefulness — but that this shift may well impair the President's foreign-policy effectiveness on both his Paris and Peking trips.

Some observers say the apparent reduction of Kissinger's advisory power was in response

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